

because of administrative and operational reasons. However, one Divisional Engineer has been posted at Keonjhar for operational and development functions and for redressal of customer grievances. One Customer Service Centre and one TRA Counter (for issue of duplicate bills) are also functioning at Keonjhar.

Reinstatement of suspended officials in HTL

3135. SHRI R. S. GAVAI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Hindustan Teleprinters Limited SC/ST officers including Manager (Power Plant) were suspended in 1995 have not been reappointed so far even though Madras High Court had quashed their suspension order in March, 1997, if so, details and reasons therefor;

(b) whether these officers are being paid some allowance which works out to be 75 percent of their salaries;

(c) whether it is a waste of useful manpower in HTL; which is facing financial crisis;

(d) the main hurdles in reappointing them in the company; and

(e) the present status of their cases and by when they would be reappointed, if not the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) Yes, Sir. Only one SC Officer Manager (Power Plant) was suspended w.e.f. 31.7.95 pending investigation of charges of selling clandestinely the technical know-how of HTL Ltd. to a competing private company. The Hon'ble High Court Madras held that since the suspension order was made owing to the pendency of criminal investigation and as that investigation had been completed and departmental action had been initiated the original order of suspension will not survive and is quashed. However, the Hon'ble High Court further held that HTL Ltd. was at liberty to pass further orders and in pursuance of these orders of Hon'ble High Court, the Manager (Power Plant) was placed under continued suspension by an order of the competent authority considering the gravity of the charges. The officer filed Writ Petition before the Hon'ble High Court of Madras

[22 August, 2000]

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for quashing the continued suspension order. The Hon'ble High Court, at admission stage of this Writ Petition on 16.12.97 did not quash the continued suspension order and advised that inquiry should be completed expeditiously.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) No, Sir. The company is making profits continuously since last three years.

(d) and (e) Since the inquiry in the case stand completed, the Inquiry Officer has submitted his Inquiry Report on 14.09.98 holding the charges proved against the officer under suspension. The officer himself filed a Writ Petition with Hon'ble High Court of Madras on 22.10.98 and obtained a stay order against further proceeding in his case. Since the case is subjudice further action can be taken only after stay is vacated.

Concessions in Telephone Registrations, rent and call charges

†3136. DR. A. K. PATEL: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) Whether Government have formulated a scheme wherein telephone registration fees, telephone call charges and the rent have been planned to be brought down;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps being taken by Government to improve telephone services in the rural areas?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) and (b) Sir, tariff of telephone services is now under the purview of Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) by virtue of TRAI Act, 1997.

With in the parameters defined by TRAI, CGMs have been empowered to fix flexible registration charges on special occasion, such as festivals etc.

(c) New technologies like WILL, C-DOT TDMA/PMP and

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.